
A joint Japanese-Peruvian archaeological mission has uncovered the remains of a woman who they believe was killed as a sacrifice, almost three thousand years ago in Peru. Dan Collyns reports:

At close to 3,000 years old, scientists were amazed at **how well preserved the remains were**. The woman, named the 'Lady of Pacopampa' after the site in the northern highlands where she was found, stood at just over one and a half metres tall.

She was discovered surrounded by gold necklaces, **pendants and ceramics**. Archaeologists were also surprised to find jewellery made from **seashells** as the site where she was found in the Andean Cajamarca region is several hundred miles from **the coast** and there was little previous evidence of trade between the two areas.

Although **the circumstances of her death** are still unclear, the Japanese researcher leading the dig, Yuji Seki, said her bones were found in **the foetal position** with the legs **bound by a cord**. He added that she was between 30 and 40 years old when she died, considerably older than most **mummified bodies** found in Peru.

Archaeologists believe the Pacopampa area where she was found was an important ceremonial site, **contemporary** with the better-known Chavin and Cupisnique cultures.

Dan Collyns, BBC News, Lima

Vocabulary and definitions

how well preserved the remains were	how little the dead body had been destroyed or decayed
pendants and ceramics	special necklaces (which have an object hanging from them) and objects (jugs, cups, containers, etc.) made from clay that has been heated
archaeologists	people who study buildings, graves, objects etc. of people who lived a long time ago
seashells	empty cases or shells of small sea creatures which are often found lying on beaches
the coast	the land next to the sea
the circumstances of her death	how and why she died
the foetal position	lying curled up (the foetal position describes how an unborn child lies when developing inside its mother while she is pregnant)
bound by a cord	tied with a rope
mummified bodies	dead bodies which have been preserved (to stop them rotting or decaying) by being treated with special oils and other substances and being wrapped in cloth
contemporary	something (here, the Pacopampa area) existed at the same time as something else (here, the Chavin and Cupisnique cultures)

More on this story: http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20090910/wl_asia_afp/perujapanarchaeology_20090910044708

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/09/090916_witn_peru_mummy.shtml